

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1385

By Sparks

A RESOLUTION to recognize Elon Musk on the occasion of his acquisition of Twitter.

WHEREAS, on April 25, 2022, Elon Musk purchased Twitter, Inc., a social media platform that promotes user interactions in sharing content around the globe; and

WHEREAS, Elon Musk stated on Twitter that "Free speech is the bedrock of a functioning democracy, and Twitter is the digital town square where matters vital to the future of humanity are debated....I also want to make Twitter better than ever by enhancing the product with new features, making the algorithms open source to increase trust, defeating the spam bots, and authenticating all humans. Twitter has tremendous potential. I look forward to working with the company and the community of users to unlock it."; and

WHEREAS, the acquisition of Twitter by Mr. Musk assures that the First Amendment right of free speech will continue to be exercised, unabated, unobstructed, and uncensored, in American society; and

WHEREAS, born from revolution, American society has been created, has evolved, and has advanced based in part on the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, which includes freedom of speech; and

WHEREAS, freedom of speech is paramount for the American system of government and American culture; more specifically, free speech allows individuals to use their own voice to ensure "We the People" control their own destiny without government intrusion or interference; and

WHEREAS, freedom of speech is not an isolated topic, as free speech and First Amendment law bleed into multiple public policy areas such as education, criminal justice, civic participation, health care, commerce, and technology; and

WHEREAS, the First Amendment's preservation of free speech and assembly encourages open public debate, which is essential to the proper function of American democracy; and

WHEREAS, approximately one in five adults get their political news primarily through social media; there is a trust deficit, and much of this deficit is rooted in how social media platforms deal with political speech; and

WHEREAS, because social media platforms are viewed as biased and untrustworthy, a growing chorus of voices on both sides of the political aisle are calling for reform; people like "Big Tech," but it does not mean that they trust them, and this distrust is degrading our national politics; and

WHEREAS, it is undeniable that companies such as Twitter are a growing part of the public square, and polling has shown that significant majorities have favorable opinions of these companies; and

WHEREAS, yet, according to a Pew Research study, three-quarters of adults believe social media companies "intentionally censor political viewpoints that they find objectionable," and that seventy-two percent of adults say media companies have too much power and influence in politics today; and

WHEREAS, this skepticism is bipartisan, as eighty percent of Republicans and fifty-two percent of Democrats admit to having little or no confidence in social media companies to determine which posts on their platforms should be labeled as inaccurate or misleading; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we recognize Elon Musk on the occasion of his acquisition of Twitter and

his ongoing commitment to promoting freedom of speech on America's preeminent social media platform for the exchange of ideas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.